



KENT COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT & KENT COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT



Joint News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 19, 2016

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Dangerously Hot Weather Prompts Warnings from Kent County Emergency Management & Health Department

GRAND RAPIDS – Summer heat can be uncomfortable for some, but temperatures in the 90s can be deadly. With the hot weather in the forecast, there are a few things people can do to beat the heat. Children, the elderly, and pets are especially at risk. Kent County Emergency Management and the Health Department has a few reminders about keeping safe during hot summer days.

- Never leave children or animals in a parked vehicle unattended. "The temperature inside a parked car can reach 120 degrees or more in a matter of minutes, even with windows cracked open," says Jack Stewart, Kent County Emergency Management Coordinator. "Heat stroke and death can occur in these dangerous situations." Nineteen children in the United States have already died so far this year when left unattended in hot cars, according to San Jose State University. (In all of 2015, 24 children died in hot cars in the U.S.)
- Elderly people have a difficult time cooling down. Their bodies may not adjust as quickly to changes in temperature. "If you know elderly adults, check on them twice a day, and make sure they drink cold, non-alcoholic beverages to stay hydrated," says Adam London, Administrative Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. "If they appear to be suffering from dizziness, muscle weakness/cramping, vomiting, heavy sweating, or paleness, they may be suffering from heat exhaustion." Get them to a cool area and medical treatment as soon as possible. Keep in mind that some medications can cause adverse reactions to heat.
- Drink non-alcoholic fluids often. If you wait to drink until you're thirsty, you may already be dehydrated. (Some people may be limited in the amount of fluid they drink due to certain conditions or medications. Check with your doctor to see how much you should drink while the weather is hot.) Avoid alcohol or sugary-drinks, as they can cause you to dehydrate faster.
- Pets dehydrate fast, so be sure they have fresh, clean drinking water. Keep them indoors or provide a shady place for them to stay out of the sun. Don't let them overheat: keep strenuous activity and playtime short.

The Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan may be able to provide air conditioners and/or fans for residents ages 60 and older through the Kent County Senior Millage. Call Senior Neighbors at 616.459.6019 to find out if you are eligible. If you are looking for additional resources during hot weather, the Heart of West Michigan United Way may be able help. Call their free informational and referral service by dialing 211 for more information.

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